

Message Text

PAGE 01 QUEBEC 00037 282355Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /053 W
-----290009Z 099093 /61

O 282054Z JAN 77
FM AMCONSUL QUEBEC
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 877
INFO AMCONSUL TORONTO PRIORITY
AMCONSUL MONTREAL PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUEBEC 0037

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, CA
SUBJECT: A THOUGHTFUL PIERRE

1. SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER TURDEAU TODAY CHOSE DIGNIFIED HIGH ROAD OF STATEMANSHIP IN WHAT IS WIDELY ASSUMED TO BE OPENING OF HIS CAMPAIGN AGAINST SEPERATISM. WITH SERIOUS, RESTRAINED CHALLENGE TO PQ TO PROVE CASE FOR SEPERATION, TRUDEAU WON STANDING ACLAIM FROM LARGE, FRIENDLY AUDIENCE COMPOSED MAINLY OF MIDDLEAGED BUSINESSMEN. AN APPARENTLY SPONTANEOUS SIGNING OF "O CANADA" BY WORRIED AUDIENCE ATESTED TO FAVORABLE AFFECT SPEECH HAD ON THIS AUDIENCE. EMOTIONAL UNDERCURRENT AMONG AUDIENCE SEEMED CLEARLY TO BE CASTING TRUDEAU IN ROLE OF THEIR FEDERALIST CHAMPION WHOM THEY HOPE WILL OUTMATCH THE SEPERATIST VILLAINS. FIRST JUDGEMENTS EXPRESSED TO US FOLLOWING SPEECH WERE GUARDEDLY HOPEFUL THAT TRUDEAU WILL FOLLOW THIS PROMISING OPENER DELIVERED ON LEVESQUE'S HOME GROUND WITH CAMPAIGN PUT SEPERATISTS ON DEFENSIVE. END SUMMARY.

2. PRIME MINISTER BEGAN SPEECH CALLING ON QUEBECOIS TO REFLECT TOGETHER ON THEIR PRESENT SITUATION. HE EXPRESSED CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 QUEBEC 00037 282355Z

OPINION THAT POSITIVE ASPECT OF PQ ELECTION IS THAT QUEBECOIS CAN NOW CHOOSE THEIR FUTURE AS QUEBECOIS, AS CANADIAN OR AS BOTH. HE NOTED THAT CANADA HAD HAD SAME CONSTITUTION SINCE

1867. CANADIANS HAVE NOT BEEN FORCED BY WAR OR CIRCUMSTANCES TO AFFIRM CANDIANNESS. HOWEVER, FOR TWENTY YEARS, EXISTENCE OF CANADA HAS BEEN PLACED IN DOUBT BY QUEBECOIS AND TO LESSER DEGREE BY SOME IN WESTERN PROVINCES. AS A RESULT, CANADA HAS REACHED POINT WHERE IT MUST ANSWER HAMLET'S QUESTION: TO BE OR NOT TO BE. JUST AS A YOUNG ADULT MUST MAKE DECISIONS

ON CAREER AND LIFE, SO MUST A NATIONA CHOOSE ITS WAY. DELAY
IN TAKING DECISION SIMPLY PROLONGS UNHEALTHY UNCERTAINTY.

3. TRUDEAU SAID CANADA NOW AT STAGE WHERE IT MUST AGAIN CHOOSE
ITS FUTURE STRUCTURE. CHOICES ARE MADE FOR GENERATIONS
BUT NOT FOR ETERNITY. WHAT IS NOT GOOD IS TO REMAIN ON CONSTANT
INDECISION. IF WE FAIL TO CHOOSE NOW, OTHERS WILL MAKE CHOICE
FOR US. PM STATED DECISION MUST BE SOON, CLEAR, AND DEFINITIVE.
WITH HAIR SPLITTING LOGIC, PM ASSERTED THAT A CHOICE OF
BOTH INDEPENDENCE AND ASSOCIATION IS INTERNALLY CONTRADICTIONARY.
POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE CAN NOT BE COMPLETE WHEN LIMITED BY ECONOMIC
DEPENDENCE. TURDEAU SAID THAT GOQ AS PARTY WHICH PROMOTES CHANGE IN
STATUS QUO MUST ESTABLISH CRITERIA AND SCHEDULE IN REFERENDUM
PROCESS. THE REST OF US, TURDEAU CONTINUED, MUST INSIST ON
KNOWING RULES WELL IN ADVANCE AND PROCESS MUST BEGIN SOON AND BE
DEFINITIVE. PQ CAN NOT BE ALLOWED TO HOLD ANOTHER REFERENDUM
IF THEY LOSE FIRST ONE. PM, FOR HIS PART, PLEDEGED TO RESPECT CLEAR
REFERENDUM RESULT IF IT WENT FOR INDEPENDENCE.

4. PRIME MINISTER CHALLENGED PQ TO PRODUCE ADVANTAGES OF
ALTERNATIVE TO FEDERALISM. IN HIS VIEW, IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO
SAY THAT FEDERALISM CAUSES PROBLEMS. ALL FORMS OF ASSOCIATION HAVE
DISADVANTAGES. EVEN LIBERTY CREATES SOME PROBLEMS. PQ MUST
BE MADE TO WEIGH ADVANTAGES OF PRESENT SYSTEM AGAINST DISAD-
VANTAGES, AND TO DEMONSTRATE IN CONCRETE TERMS THAT BALANCE OF
ADVANTAGE LAYES WITH INDEPENDENCE. BURDEN OF PROOF
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 QUEBEC 00037 282355Z

IS ON GOQ AS IT IS PARTY WISHING CHANGE SYSTEM WHICH HAS BROUGHT
SIGNIFICANT BENEFITS OVER PAST 110 YEARS. IT IS ALREADY EVIDENT,
IN PM'S VIEW, THAT PQ SEES ECONOMIC BENEFITS IN CONFEDERATION
AS THEY WANT TO MAINTAIN SOME LINKS THROUGH COMMON MARKET,
FREE TRADE ZONE OR SOME OTHER FORM OF CONTINUING ASSO-
CIATION. HOW WOULD THIS ENLARGE THE ADVANTAGES NOW ENJOYED
BY THE POPULATION?

5. PM PUT FORWARD FAMILIAR ARGUMENT THAT PROVINCES ALREADY HAVE
GREAT POWER TO ACT. FURTHER, HE NOTED THAT IT WOULD BE
NECESSARY FOR QUEBECOIS TO SPEAK MORE ENGLISH IN AN INDEPENDENT QUE-
BEC THAN THEY DO NOW AS THEY WOULD LOSE POLITICAL LVERAGE THEY
HAVE IN REST OF CANADA AND WOULD BE ALONE IN NORTH AMERICAN AN-
GLOPHONE SEA. TRUDEAU CHALLENGED AUDIENCE TO READ LEVESQUE'S
ECONOMIC CLUB SPEECH AND NOTE THAT EVERYTHING LEVESQUE PROPOSES,
EXCEPT INDEPENDENCE AND SOME CONTROLS ON FOREIGN INVESTMENT,
CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED UNDER CURRENT CONSTITUION WITH CURRENT PROVIN-
CIAL POWERS. HE SUGGESTED LEVESQUE SHOULD GET ON WITH IM-
PLEMENTING PROGRAM AND STOP TALKING ABOUT INDEPENDENCE.

6. AS PM DREW TO CLOSE OF SOBER PENSIVE SPEECH, HE NOTED MAIN
QUESTION WAS HOW BEST TO GOVERN. HE APPEARED WILLING TO CONSIDER
REWRITING CONSTITUTION OR BEING MORE FLEXIBLE IN FEDERAL-
PROVINCIAL RELATIONS, AS LONG AS BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS, INCLUDING

LANGUAGE GUARANTEES, WERE INCLUDED IN FINAL PRODUCT. HE ALSO INSISTED THAT ANY CHANGED CONSTITUTION CLARIFY EXPLICITLY POWERS OF FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT BUT MADE NO SPECIFIC PROPOSALS. HE RETURNED TO EARLIER THEME THAT PRESSING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS DEMAND THAT CONSTITUTIONAL CHOICES BE MADE SOON. HE REMARKED THAT FOR LAST TWENTY YEARS MUCH ENERGY HAS BEEN EXPENDED ON QUESTION OF SEPARATISM, IDENTITY, ETC. AND NOW WAS TIME FOR EXISTING GOVERNMENTS TO DEFINE CHOICES AND ALLOW DECISION TO BE MADE. CANADA'S CRISES TODAY IS A DANGER BUT ALSO A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO DECIDE FOR SEVERAL GENERATIONS IF ONE CAN BE QUEBECOIS AND CANADIAN. HE URGED QUEBECOIS TO REFLECT AND HOPED THAT THEY WOULD SOON SHOW WISH
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 QUEBEC 00037 282355Z

TO BE CANADIAN AND MERIT BEING CANADIAN.

7. WE TALKED WITH FEDERAL MP H.T. HERBERT (LIBERAL-VAUDREUIL) AFTER SPEECH. HE STATED SPEECH WAS GOOD AND TAILORED TO AUDIENCE. IN HERBERT'S VIEW, IT WAS FIRST STEP IN A WELL THOUGHT-OUT GAME PLAN WHICH PM WILL IMPLEMENT OVER NEXT TWO YEARS BUILDING UP TO EXPECTED REFERENDUM. HERBERT SAID THAT IT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO SEE WHO TRUDEAU AND LEVESQUE DESIGNATE AS THEIR PRINCIPAL DEPUTIES FOR THE FIGHT AS THEY CAN NOT CARRY BURDEN ALONE. HE OPINED THAT FINMIN MC DONALD WAS CLEARLY EVOLVING AS TRUDEAU'S CHOICE. IN RESPONSE TO OUR QUIRY, HE SAID ANDRE OUELLET WILL BE GOOD ORGANIZER AS LIBERAL CAMPAIGN MANAGER IN QUEBEC. "HE WILL HAVE TO BE AS UPCOMING BYELECTIONS WILL BE TOUGH AND WILL DETERMINE EARLY ON IF WE ARE GOING ANYWHERE OR NOT." (WELL INFORMED QUEBEC LIBERAL TOLD ME LAST NIGHT THAT OUELLET IS DEEPLY DISTRUSTED WITHIN PARTY AND THAT HIS APPOINTMENT IS NOT WIDELY FAVORED.)

8. COMMENT: CLEARLY, TRUDEAU'S SPEECH SEEMED GOOD WAY OF EASING INTO CAMPAIGN AGAIN SEPERATISTS AND CERTAINLY APPEALED TO MIDDLE AGED, WELL DISPOSED AUDIENCE. IT COULD WELL BE FIRST STEP IN WELL THOUGHT-OUT PLAN AS HERBERT SUGGESTED. HOWEVER, GIVEN HIGH EXPECTATION BUILT UP BY PRESS THAT TRUDEAU MIGHT SIGNIFICANTLY ALTER HIS INFLEXIBLE FEDERALIST COURSE, WE BELIEVE THAT THERE WILL BE CONSIDERABLE DISSAPPOINTMENT AMONG MIDDLE SPECTRUM OF QUEBECOIS POPULATION, WHICH WOULD HAVE PREFERRED MORE CONCRETE ALTERNATIVE TO SEPERATISM THAN NUANCED REFERENCES TO POSSIBILITIES OF CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES. PERHAPS TRUDEAU COULD NOT HAVE SAID MORE AT THIS TIME. IF SUCH WAS THE CASE HE SHOULD NOT HAVE ALLOWED EXPECTATION TO BE FIRED BY PRESS SPECULATIONS TO POINT WHERE LARGELY UNDECIDED MIDDLE GROUP COULD LOSE INTEREST IN FEDERALIST SOLUTION.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 22-Sep-1999 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, SECESSION, SPEECHES, PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 28-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977QUEBEC00037
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Expiration:
Film Number: D770031-1184
Format: TEL
From: QUEBEC
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770193/baaaeuyr.tel
Line Count: 162
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Message ID: cb9584de-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3681270
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: A THOUGHTFUL PIERRE
TAGS: PINT, CA, (TRUDEAU, PIERRE-ELLIOTT)
To: STATE INFO TORONTO MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/cb9584de-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009